



Human population health: Sentinel criterion of environmental sustainability

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Abstract:

Our personal day-to-day experience of health ailments, reinforced by much recent behaviour-oriented 'health promotion' rhetoric, easily misconstrues 'health' as a local and individual-level issue. We thus fail to recognize that, over time, the health profile of a population is the real 'bottom line' indicator of the prevailing environmental and social conditions: food yields, freshwater supplies, climatic stability, natural constraints on infectious agents, social relations, and the within-population distribution of access to these environmental assets. For Homo sapiens, 'environmental sustainability' must therefore be, ultimately, about sustaining health-supporting environmental conditions. (We may worry about the biosphere 'out there', but Earth will, as ever, re-equilibrate.) Recognition of this dependence of human population health on natural environmental function will add significant additional motivation to manage Earth's environment and climate sustainably.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2009.07.001>

Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Air Pollution, Ecosystem Changes, Extreme Weather Event, Food/Water Quality, Food/Water Security, Food/Water Security, Human Conflict/Displacement, Solar Radiation, Temperature

Air Pollution: Allergens, Ozone

Extreme Weather Event: Drought, Hurricanes/Cyclones, Wildfires

Food/Water Quality: Other Water Quality Issue

Water Quality (other): Ocean acidification

Food/Water Security: Agricultural Productivity, Fisheries, Nutritional Quality

Temperature: Extreme Heat

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Adaption/Mitigation):

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Developmental Effect, Infectious Disease, Injury, Mental Health/Stress, Morbidity/Mortality, Respiratory Effect

Developmental Effect: Reproductive, Other Functional Deficit

Infectious Disease: Foodborne/Waterborne Disease, General Infectious Disease, Vectorborne Disease

Foodborne/Waterborne Disease: General Foodborne/Waterborne Disease

Vectorborne Disease: General Vectorborne

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Mood Disorder

Respiratory Effect: Asthma

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Mitigation

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified